



UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA

FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA, LETRAS Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

“Improving Speaking Skills Using Debate Activities for 12th Graders at Unidad

Educativa Particular Bilingüe “Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind”

Trabajo de Titulación previo a la obtención del
título de Licenciado en Ciencias de la Educación
en Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

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CUENCA – ECUADOR

2017



RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio es validar el uso de los debates para mejorar las habilidades del habla en los estudiantes de la Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind. Para lograr los objetivos propuestos, un estudio cuantitativo basado en el modo causi-experimental fue llevado a cabo.

Los instrumentos que fueron utilizados para recolectar información fueron: pre-test, post-test, una observación en el aula. De acuerdo con los resultados de esta investigación, se concluye que la utilización de los debates pueden mejorar las habilidades del habla en los estudiantes del colegio debido a que los estudiantes demostraron un considerable mejoramiento desde el momento de la aplicación del pre-test hasta el post-test en parámetros como la organización y preparación, conocimiento del tema, pronunciación, expresión corporal, y contacto visual.

Para investigaciones futuras, se recomienda aplicar la técnica del debate con un periodo de tiempo más extendido.

Palabras Claves: Método comunicativo, Habilidades del habla, Debates, Causi-Experimental, Mejoramiento.



ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to validate the use of debate to enhance speaking skills in 12th grade students at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind. In order to achieve the proposed goals, a quantitative study based on a quasi-experimental design was carried out. Different research instruments were used to collect the necessary data; they were the pre-test, post-test, and a classroom observation to give the foundation to this study. This data also helped us to conclude that using debates can improve speaking skills in students, as the results from the pre-test and the post-test on parameters such as organization and preparation, subject knowledge, mechanics, elocution, and eye contact improved after the intervention of these activities. For further investigation, it is recommended to apply the Debate Technique for longer periods of time.

Key words: Communicative Language Teaching, Speaking Skills, Debates, Quasi-Experimental- Improvement.



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear family. A special feeling of gratitude to my parents Ramon Pacheco and Ximena Padilla, who have always loved me and supported me, and whose good example taught me to be a good person and made me the person I am. I also want to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Eric Kindred, whose words and encouragement have supported me every day during this process.

Adriana

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved family. A special gratitude to my parents Orlando Armijos and Ibelia Solano, who have always guided and supported me, and whose good examples and valuable advice helped me to become a good person. In the same way, I would like to dedicate this research paper to my dear wife, Sandra Huerta, as well as my two lovely daughters, Kristell and Jeslie, who supported and inspired me to never give up.

Diego



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the people who have helped us during this study. This thesis would not have been possible without their support.

First of all, we would like to give special thanks to our thesis advisor, Magister Adriana Mora, who provided us with many constructive suggestions and helpful advice during all the stages of this work.

We sincerely thank the academic authorities and teachers of the School of English Language and Literature of the University of Cuenca, as well as the staff and students of Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind, for giving us the opportunity to carry out our research project.

Finally, our special thanks to all the members of our family who walked next to us giving us their support and love during this work.



INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this project was to enhance speaking skills by using debate technique activities with 12th graders at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe “Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind”, in the city of Machala. According to some class observations, it was easy to notice the lack of time to practice speaking, due to the number of students or the amount of class periods. It is imperative to mention that an important aspect of this study is to make teachers aware of the advantages that debate technique activities may have within an English classroom. Classroom debates can help students feel confident when using the language to express ideas, thoughts, and points of view, and at the same time, they allow students to work on all the other skills, improving their overall learning.

This thesis is divided into five chapters that will provide information about the importance and significance of this project. The first chapter explains the objectives that guided the whole project. The second chapter describes some theories that support this research project. The third chapter mentions the type of research as well as the intervention that has been used to carry out this thesis. The fourth chapter details the results of analysis, and the last chapter contains the conclusion, as well as possible recommendations for further research.

Finally, we may say that this whole project can give novice, experienced, and future teachers a better understanding of how to use debates to improve English class at different levels and in various contexts. As a recommendation for further investigation, it is recommended to conduct debates for longer periods, the entire scholastic year if possible.



CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project was to improve speaking skills through the use of debate activities, working with 12th graders at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe “Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind”, in the city of Machala. Alongside this, the debates were designed to motivate students, and give them the opportunity to talk in class. A careful observation allowed us to identify a level of fear in most of the students when they had to talk or give opinions inside the EFL classroom.

Another important aspect of this thesis is to propose ways to make students feel more confident when speaking. In order to do this, all activities were developed under the parameters of the debate activity. Students were given specific topics to discuss in the classroom and had the chance to express their points of view or arguments for themselves.

Some modern and innovative debate activities were adapted to match students' level and interests. Additionally, original activities were created to cater student's abilities. Through a survey, it was possible to find what topics best suited 12th graders, and what encouraged them to participate and speak during class.

Finally, this thesis provides information about the debate format, such as the process of debating and the roles of the participants. Additionally, in order to use these debate activities correctly, this thesis describes the methods involved, in order to facilitate the understanding of their use and application.



1.2. JUSTIFICATION

Nowadays, teachers have access to all types of resources that can be used in the educational process, but the ones that should be considered the most are those that motivate students to achieve accurate communication in English. Observation has shown that English teachers just apply the same method for all type of students; however, they do not realize that the educational process depends on the students` level, interest and age. Most students do not take English because they want to; they take this subject because it is mandatory in all levels of education. The only thing that students want is to pass the school year, without giving importance to their learning.

Dörnyei (1994) argued that “the main factor to learn a foreign language is motivation” (p.78). Teachers have to use the appropriate methodology to succeed in the teaching - learning process. Some studies have shown that debates are very useful in motivating students to learn a foreign language, and practice it in a meaningful way.

Throughout the investigation of this thesis, English teachers were guided to improve their classes by motivating students to practice speaking, utilizing debates as engaging activities for the classroom.

The main idea of this research is that English teachers and their students get most of the benefit from using the language in a meaningful way inside and outside the classroom; all the activities, as mentioned before, were based on students’ interests and needs. Through debate activities, students had the opportunity to enhance their speaking skills, and hence, students learned how to share their own opinions and ideas in a dynamic and interactive way.

1.3. BACKGROUND

As said by Ali and Sayed Salahuddin (2013) “the countries that use English as a foreign language need effective activities which propel students to practice skills of the



language properly inside as well as outside classrooms. Debating is a practice that inspires learners to open their mouth, get into discussion, defend their own positions, place counter arguments and also conduct research on related issues” (p. 147). Equally important, debates can be used in EFL classes as a tool to assist students with real-life language practice.

Krieger (2005) argued the following: debate is an excellent activity for language learning because it engages students in a variety of cognitive and linguistic ways. In addition to providing meaningful listening, speaking and writing practice, debate is also highly effective for developing argumentation skills for persuasive speech and writing.

As most people know, English has become the most common language for communication among people who do not speak the same first language, as well as the language of science; for these reasons, English is very important around the world and everybody needs to learn it. Unfortunately, high school students do not feel confident when giving their opinions and points of view due to the lack of motivation, the use of poor communicative activities, or activities that are monotonous or without context.

In analyzing the educational process in Ecuador, there are many factors that should be taken into consideration, including: the quality of the education depends on the institution, whether it is public or private, students’ economic situation, regional accents, the number of students in the classroom, and classroom environment.

Ecuador is separated into four different regions, but with two different school periods (coastal and highlands), as well as some social, cultural, and behavioral differences. The coastal region is comprised of El Oro, Guayas and the Galapagos Islands, among others. On the coast, classes begin in early May each year and end in



February. On the other hand, the highland region includes the Inter-Andean region and the Amazon, where classes start in September and finish in June.

Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe “Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind” is in Machala, in the coastal province of El Oro. It is one of the best institutions in our country due to its multiple virtues. The classroom environment is comfortable and different from other institutions, since this is a private bilingual high school with the goal of educating children and youth with a solid humanistic foundation, mastery of science, and technology. Teachers are specialized and certified in languages. It is a nationally recognized institution of excellence that boasts numerous partnerships, programs and certifications, which demonstrate the excellence of their educational programs. It offers an International Baccalaureate education, as well as national and international certifications such as: EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management - Second Star), IBEC (International Certifications Sufficiency Computers) and ADOBE, English language training, and French as a third language. There are specialized teachers, certified at the B2, C1, and C2 levels according to the Common European Framework, as well as virtual classrooms, and agreements with French Alliance (Alianza Francesa), the British School of Languages, and Cambridge University.

For all the reasons mentioned above, utilizing debate as a classroom activity will prove to be very useful for language learners in improving their speaking skills; at the same time, it will help students feel more motivated and allow them to participate actively during classes, and in their future preparation. Thus, language learners may become active language users and communicate more effectively in English.



1.4. Research Question

How can debate activities contribute to the improvement of speaking skills in 12th graders at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe “Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind”?

1.5. Objectives

1.5.1. Aim

- To improve the speaking level of 12th graders through the use of debate activities at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe “Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind”, Machala

1.5.2. Specific Objectives

- To gather bibliographical and scientific information related to debate technique.
- To design and conduct a survey with 25 students to determine which debate topics they consider important and relevant.
- To analyze students’ level and it’s improvement through a pre-test and post-test
- To create six lesson plans for each of the units in the book.
- To utilize debate activities in order to improve student’s speaking skills.

1.6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, there are many methods and techniques that teachers can use to improve their students’ oral skills. Many authors suggest a lot of techniques and methods to improve speaking skills; however, debates are particularly useful in the



educational process, because they help develop speaking skills in both teachers and language learners. Through this technique, teachers are able to create real situations in class to teach English according to each student's level and interest, while maintaining their engagement.

Furthermore, speaking is one of the most important language skills that must be mastered by students to become good communicators. Speaking is making use of language in ordinary voice; uttering words; knowing and being able to use a language; expressing oneself in words; making speech. (Hornby, 1995)

Snider (2011) emphasized that "debate is about change" (p. 97), referring to the battles we have to fight in order to improve everything that surrounds us. Equally important, Metsaki (2012) stated that "a debate also asks a person to be able to confirm facts, persuade an audience, or make an appeal regarding a topic" (p. 207). In addition, debating is used when we need to clarify the matter and present our points of view to come to an agreement. Moreover, the activity of debate provides the chance to analyze issues from different perspectives in order to make a final decision.

There are four skills in teaching English, and all of them are very important to learn a foreign language. They have to be taught and practiced by English teachers at schools. Language is a tool for people to communicate with others, especially foreign people, and to express their ideas, opinions, emotions, attitudes and feelings. Moreover, speaking is a very important skill, since people learn the language in order to use it for communication purposes.

In teaching speaking, teachers have to present the material creatively, and they should provide students with opportunities to practice it. At the same time, teachers also have to find the best technique for their students.



Snider (2011) has mentioned the following, in order to improve the speaking skill in students; the use of debate and dialogue techniques should be implemented in the classroom to strengthen the language or weak the fear to use it (p. 157).

Speaking is the action of conveying information or expressing one's thoughts or feelings in spoken language. To teach speaking, the teacher requires a scoring system that will facilitate grading and evaluating improvement objectively in several key areas: comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, grammar and pronunciation.

Vásconez (2015) argued that debate is a process of presenting an idea or opinion in which two opposing parts try to defend their idea or opinion. Equally important, she stated that a debate is an excellent activity for language learning because it engages students in a variety of cognitive and linguistic ways (p. 43).

As a result, debates must be considered an important way for students to improve their oral skills, even though it may cause pressure on learners and teachers.

There are several techniques that teachers can use to teach speaking. The techniques should be appropriate and interesting to involve students in the educational process. Debates are a way of improving verbal communication and critical thinking, and encouraging students to become more active in various situations. Additionally, it can create active learning because students will learn how to construct their ideas, work in groups, and share knowledge. It is useful to work as a group with students because in this way students feel more confident when speaking, and they can help each other as well.

Like every technique, debates have some advantages and disadvantages. As we have mentioned before, debates are very useful to develop the spoken language because



students get to hear both sides of a topic; they learn from each other, and are able to appreciate different opinions and ideas. Moreover, it helps to develop students' knowledge. While debating, they will hear updated information from other debaters, which can enrich their awareness in the English language.

In fact, in the countries where English is treated as a foreign language, students cope with lack of language knowledge that prevents them from using it outside the classroom. The only place where students can practice the English language is at school. Moreover, in most cases, EFL teachers fail to implement the best activities, approaches and techniques in an appropriate manner. Debating can be used to learn English in both formal and informal settings through real life situations. If debating is practiced appropriately, students will learn both the English language and presentation skills, which will make them confident users of English in academic, social and professional settings.

For this reason, in the application of debate activities and the enhancement of the speaking abilities with high school learners at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind. We will focus on the introduction and implementation of debates, not only to boost the use of the spoken language, but to improve other language skills students may need for their future activities.



CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

The Communicative Approach was articulated by Robert Lang, emphasizing interaction and problem solving as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning English or any other language (Richards, 2006). As such, it tends to highlight activities such as role-play, pair work and group work. It changes the focus from traditional language teaching, with its emphasis on grammar and the teacher-centered classroom, to that of the active use of authentic language and a student-centered learning process.

According to Jack Richards (2006) “the communicative approach is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning. When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used, and this will allow them to learn to use the language” (p. 1). Classroom activities guided by the communicative approach are characterized by trying to produce meaningful and real communication, at all levels. As a result, there is more emphasis on skills than systems, lessons are more learner-centered, and it uses authentic materials. Practicing and provoking real situations for students to have dialogues or debates are examples of the communicative approach, as they involve meaningful communication.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasized “self-direction for the learners” (Kuhn Wei, 2010, p. 174). The role of teachers in this method is not to be around to guide them the whole time; when learners speak the language outside the classroom they are expected to take on a greater degree of responsibility for their own



learning. According to Kuhn Wei (2010) “this is essential to the active development of the new language” (p.4). The learner should enter into situations where communication takes place as much as possible to increase his or her communicative proficiency.

Teachers no longer rely on activities that require repetition, accuracy and memorization of sentences and grammatical patterns; instead, they require learners to negotiate meaning and to interact meaningfully with the new language. Learners have to participate in classroom activities based on cooperative working rather than an individualistic one; they need to listen to their peers in order to perform group work successfully. The teacher adopts different roles, on one hand they are a “facilitator, a guide and a helper” and on the other hand, a “coordinator, an idea-person and a co-communicator” (Kuhn Wei, 2010, p. 10). They talk less and listen more to students’ output. In addition, the teacher also identifies students’ learning strategies, helps students improve them if necessary and shows them how to work independently. Instructional tasks become less important and fade into the background. That does not mean that they are not used at all, but with less significance.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) supported that “these changes give the teacher more scope for variety and creativity and she gives up her status as a person of authority in a teacher-learner hierarchy” (p. 34). It is the teacher’s responsibility to be creative and prepare appropriate material at home. The teacher can also assume other roles and try to motivate students in order to make them speak more.

The central concept in CLT is “communicative competence” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.159), since it covers both the spoken and written language and all four language skills. As Kuhn Wei (2010) stated, the “development of communicative competence requires realistic interaction among learners using meaningful, contextualized language” (p. 8).



Learning strategies allow learners to become more self-directed and more independent in learning the new language, and helps them actively participate in communication. Savignon (2002) included a useful summary of the eight characteristics of communicative language teaching from the linguist M. Berns:

1. Language teaching is based on a view of language as communication. That is, language is seen as a social tool that speakers use to make meaning; speakers communicate about something to someone for some purpose, either orally or in written.
2. Diversity is recognized and accepted as part of language development, and it is used by second language learners and users, as it is with first language.
3. A learner's competence is considered in relative, not in absolute, terms.
4. More than one variety of language is recognized as a viable model for learning and teaching.
5. Culture is recognized as instrumental in shaping speaker's communicative competence, in both their first and subsequent languages.
6. No single methodology or fixed set of techniques is prescribed.
7. Language use is recognized as serving ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions and it is related to the development of learner's competence in each.
8. It is essential that learners be engaged in doing things with language – that is, that they use language for a variety of purposes in all phases of learning.

(Richards, *Communicative Language Today*, 2006, p. 6)

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) “one major feature of communicative language teaching is pair and group work. This type of work is suggested to encourage students to use and practice functions and forms” (p. 171). This



is useful, since students learn to be more independent and accept responsibility for their own learning.

Piepho (1981) discussed the following levels of objectives in a communicative approach:

1. An integrative and content level (language as a means of expression)
2. A linguistic and instrumental level (language as a semiotic system and an object of learning);
3. An affective level of interpersonal relationships and conduct (language as a means of expressing values and judgments about oneself and others);
4. A level of individual learning needs (remedial learning based on error analysis)
5. A general educational level of extra-linguistic goals (language learning within the school curriculum).

These are proposed as general objectives, applicable to any teaching situation.

Particular objectives of CLT cannot be defined beyond this level of specification, since this approach assumes that language teaching will reflect the particular needs of the target language learners. These needs may be in the domains of reading, writing, listening, or speaking, each of which can be approached from a communicative perspective. Curriculum or instructional objectives for a particular course would reflect specific aspects of communicative competence according to the learner's proficiency level and communicative needs (Piepho, 1981).

Communicative Language Teaching facilitates and fulfills the learning process to improve speaking skills. Communication is an important part of the goal of language teaching. There are various reasons why Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become very useful among learners. To mention a few:



- ✓ Communicative Language Teaching is relevant to all four language skills.
- ✓ The concept of Communication can refer both to the properties of language and to social behavior.
- ✓ CLT is a dynamic and intensely practical skill, providing the learners opportunities for thorough and meaningful rehearsal of the English they will need for effective communication.
- ✓ CLT enables the learners to use the target language to communicate in real life.
- ✓ CLT places emphasis on developing skills, particularly speaking skills, within a wide range of communicative settings.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) “The Communicative Approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence” (p.76). Communicative Language Teaching increases students’ opportunities to improve and develop speaking skills, and for this reason, it is one of the best methods to strengthen speaking skills.

2.2. THE SPEAKING SKILL

Speaking is one of the most important skills to be mastered by students in order to be better communicators. Speaking is the verbal use of language to communicate with others. Speech is about making choices; students must choose how to interact in expressing themselves and forming social relationships through dialogue or conversations.

Rubiati (2015) has stated that speaking is an ability that is taken for granted through the social communication. The author has also mentioned that speaking can be



seen as the way to carry out feelings and thoughts through words, or even having a conversation with others. It means that humans use words and phrases in an interactive process in order to give them a meaning in a conversation, according to each given situation and context.

2.2.1. Elements of speaking

Rubiati (2010) mentioned “there are many elements of speaking that must be mastered by students in order to be good speakers” (p. 7). Explained by Rubiati, in order to make students good communicators they have to know some elements of speaking; in this way, students do not face difficulties when speaking, and as a result, they will feel more confident.

According to this author the four elements of speaking that students must master to become better communicators are:

- ✓ Connected speech: effective speakers of English need to be able not only to produce the individual phonemes of English, but also to use fluent connected speech. In connected speech, sounds are modified, omitted, added, or weakened. It is for this reason that we should involve students in activities designed specifically to improve their connected speech.
- ✓ Expressive devices: native English speaker change the pitch and stress on particular parts of utterances, vary volume and speed, and show by other physical and nonverbal means how they are feeling. The use of these devices contributes to the ability to convey meaning and allows the extra expressions of emotion and intensity to appear. Students should be able to deploy at least some of such suprasegmental features and devices in the same way if they are to be fully effective communicators.



- ✓ Lexis and grammar: spontaneous speech is marked by the use of a number of common lexical phrases, especially in their performance of certain language functions. Teachers should therefore supply a variety of phrases for different functions, such as: greetings, agreement and disagreement.
- ✓ Negotiation of language: In order to speak effectively, we can use the negotiation of language. That means we ask for clarification when we do not understand the message the speaker is trying to transmit, and when we show the structure of what we are saying to the audience.

In short, speaking is not only having a range of vocabulary and knowing the grammatical structures, but also mastering all elements of speaking, because each one is very important and useful to become better speakers. Everyone will understand the messages, if we master the elements of speaking. A useful way to improve speaking skills is to practice utilizing debates, where the participants use real communication to express their personal opinion, thoughts and feelings about a specific topic.

2.3. DEBATE AS A TEACHING TECHNIQUE

Snider (2011) has emphasized that debate is about change, because we have to be constantly involved in a struggle to improve our lives, our country, and our community. He also mentioned the battles we have to fight in order to improve everything that surrounds us. Thus, debating is used when we need to clarify matters and present our points of view to come to an agreement.

Snider (2011) has also referred to “debating as a process that determines how change should occur” (Snider, 2011, p. 13). Debating provides techniques to analyze



issues from different perspectives, which can be in favor or against an issue, in order to make a final decision.

In addition, Snider (2011) stated that debates can give you the power to change your world and yourself. The author asserted that your voice can be a powerful instrument for changing everything in any place you are: for example, your school, your community, your nation, and the world. However, before changing the world, debating changes you, because it gives you new skills and abilities that you can use to achieve the changes you want.

Equally important, Snider and Schnurer (2002) stated that, “in most high schools and universities, students participate in debates only on competitions” (p. 135). This is very important, because students like participating in competitions in order to know who the best is; in a debate, all of them want to be winners, as nobody likes to be the loser.

Additionally, Metsaki (2015) argued that “a debate also asks a person to be able to confirm facts, persuade an audience, or make an appeal regarding a topic” (as cited in Vásconez. p. 39). This author refers to how all these techniques allow students to acquire argumentation and reasoning skills, and develop their critical thinking. In a debate, the participants must take into account that they have to be responsible for their arguments: either they are in favor or against the proposal.

Another important aspect that Snider (2011) has stated is the following: “there are formal and informal debates” (p. 13). One example of formal debate is the political debate, which requires the use of sophisticated debating skills. On the other hand, informal situations like the ones at school, with friends, and with family will make people discuss issues and look for solutions. Informal debates can occur anywhere, including meetings, dinners, or games. In addition, a debate occurs subconsciously,



because when we are in a meeting we tend to create discussions about anything and at the end, we come up with different types of decisions.

2.3.1. The use of debates in the classroom

Debating can be used in the EFL classroom as a tool to make students practice English skills in real-life situations. Only in that way, students will be engaged enough to talk about something in front of others.

Quinn (2009) said that “debating gives you the chance to meet new people and new ideas. Best of all, you have the opportunity to stand up and argue with someone in public, in a stimulating and organized dispute about real issues” (p. 1). The author argues that debates make students discuss their ideas, points of view or arguments to convince people. Also, debating is an important and interesting way to discuss issues that our society faces. When students discuss a topic, they have to show evidence to defend their ideas, if they want to be the winners. Having a debate allows students to get to know many different people with diverse points of view.

Furthermore, debating is part of opening tasks due to its features of enabling learners to propose their point of views for or against different topics (Vásconez, 2015). Moreover, the use of debates in the classroom is very important because it encourages teamwork, language enhancement, and speaking skills improvement, among others.

Additionally, the debate is an excellent activity for language learning, because it engages students in a variety of cognitive and linguistic ways. In addition to providing meaningful listening, speaking and writing practice, debates are also highly effective for developing argumentation skills for persuasive speaking and writing (Krieger, 2005).

Research by Alasmaril and Salahuddin Ahmed (2012) supported the theory that “debating can be used brilliantly to boost up students’ speaking in English” (p. 104).



These authors refer to debates as one of the best tools that English teachers should use or apply in classroom when working on oral skill development.

Additionally, (Ali & Sayed Salahuddin, 2013) stated that the use of debate, speech and conversation in EFL classes will first of all push out the students' fear about the English language. Moreover, regular practice of debate, speech and conversation will improve the different English skills such as fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary (p. 147).

As it has been written before, the authors stated that students should be familiar with some jargon and technical terms when conversing, so in this way students will learn more vocabulary. The role of the teachers will be to work as mediators; at the same time, they will facilitate students' learning.

Consequently, during debates students will improve several skills, learn many new words, and collect information about numerous areas, which all together will enrich their spoken English, and ultimately make them more confident speakers.

2.3.2. Types of debates

Rai stated that there are five kinds of debate in the classroom, and provided a format and main characteristics for each one (as cited in Vázquez, 2015, p. 40):

1. Four-corner: The four corners of the class are defined as “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree.” Learners are asked to choose their point of view on a certain topic. When everyone has selected a corner, the students sit down to write a paragraph summarizing their opinion. An important characteristic of this format is that the debate is not simply defined by dualism; students can indicate the strength of their opinion.



2. Fishbowl: When using this format, students can be arranged in different ways. The first option is to put students in two groups, taking an affirmative or negative position on a resolution. Each group prepares their arguments, and engages in back and forth rebuttals. Another solution is to divide the class into three groups. Two groups gather the arguments for and against the topic, thereby becoming the expert groups, while the third one acts as the audience.
3. Think-pair-share: Each student works individually writing their arguments both for and against the topic. Then students are arranged into pairs to compare their answers and outline their ideas. After that, they are rearranged into groups of four to come to an agreement if they are for or against the topic. Then, they compose their final arguments to support their views and present them in front of the class. Since this type of debate starts from students' individual performance leading up to group work, it makes all students practice and develop their thinking, writing, listening, and speaking skills.
4. Role-play debates: For this kind of debate, students are asked to play a stakeholder role that is appropriate for the topic. For instance, a debate about banning smoking at universities could involve roles such as a student, the principal of the university, the owner of a tobacco company, a university student's mother, etc. Each student takes on the role and defends their point of view from the position that can be associated with that role. In this manner, the debate can bring up clashing arguments for and against a controversial topic. In the above example, a student playing the role of the principal will,



necessarily, present arguments associated with a person in authority while considering the students' point of view. However, this type of debate could be seen as controversial if important perspectives like cultural issues and women's views were left out. Teachers should increase their students' sensitivity to diverse points of views as a preliminary task.

5. Lincoln-Douglas debate: This debate format references the way in which Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas debated in 1858, for an Illinois senate seat. Two students are asked to debate a topic with arguments and rebuttals. It can also be set up with groups of six students. In each group, two students debate and the rest are the audience.

2.3.3. Characteristics of debaters

As we know, most people are afraid of public speaking because they are not involved in these kinds of situations. However, if you understand and know how to use your voice, gestures, and body, you will be more comfortable and find the experience far more pleasant than you thought, and as a result, your presentation will be more effective than other people who do not know or use these tips.

Snider (2011) described some important characteristics that debaters need to have in order to give a successful and convincing speech by projecting energy, enthusiasm, commitment, and variety in his/her discourse (p. 102):

- ✓ Voice: this is one of the most important communication tools for humans. In a presentation, tone of voice plays an important role because you can communicate concern, joy, fear, or curiosity. Also, there are important features to be taken into consideration such as volume (to appropriately fill the acoustic



space you will be speaking in), pitch (to indicate emotional state), and speed (to emphasize key points).

- ✓ Face: being one of the most expressive parts of the body, the face makes people pay close attention to arguments that could be highlighted by facial expressions. It is important that facial expressions match the points being put forward, and in this way, the audience will not be confused.
- ✓ Eye contact: In most cases, establishing and maintaining eye contact is considered an indicator of honesty. Arguments will appear stronger if people look at their audience. In addition, good eye contact gives you valuable feedback from the audience, such as if they understand, enjoy, or agree with your speech or not.
- ✓ Body movement: The body presents the debater as a whole being. Therefore, body movement should be varied according to the topic presented. A phrase will capture audience attention not only if it is important, but also if it is emphasized by appropriate body movements.
- ✓ Gestures: finally, this factor is very important because gestures energize and animate the presentation. In addition, they punctuate the presentation with meaning. Gestures can signal that you are numbering, sequencing, emphasizing, demonstrating, illustrating, or comparing information. When a presenter uses natural gestures, the efficacy of gestures will depend on their variation, but they should be contextually appropriate to avoid distracting the audience.

2.3.4. Advantages of debate as a teaching technique

As a communicative and an interactive activity, debate can be integrated into the classroom context. Just by participating, listening and watching a debate in the



classroom, students can improve their speaking skills automatically. A debate has many advantages in the classroom:

- ✓ A debate allows students to share and cooperate with one another.
- ✓ It educates students about responsibility.
- ✓ It encourages creativity.
- ✓ Students are motivated to enjoy the activity.
- ✓ It can improve students' speaking ability.

As has been mentioned previously, debate is a form of producing conversation among people, and at the same time, within the smaller context of debate students can gain more confidence. We may add that debates can be beneficial to the educational process. Furthermore, Somjai & Jansem (2015) also stated that “debate has some benefits in the teaching and learning process” (p. 29). The authors point out that through debates, English teachers can obtain a lot of benefits and in this way, it may help students to reach the desired outcome more quickly.

There are a number of other characteristics related to debates. Firstly, a debate equips students to cope with both success and failure within social and academic contexts. Secondly, students are able to make and defend informed choices about complicated issues outside of their own area of interest. Thirdly, debate is not only a way to connect students with academic subjects; it can also connect students to public life. Finally, the policy that is used in debate specifically, can teach students to adapt to multiple perspectives, which is described as one of the most important problem solving skills.

Students will improve their speaking skills through the use of debate, because they will feel motivated and engaged to learn and master the English language.

2.3.5. Disadvantages of debate



In the learning process, debate has some disadvantages during application. First of all, debating can only be used for specific subjects, such as those concerned with agreeing or disagreeing, and giving arguments. Secondly, a debate requires a long time to prepare, in order to make sure it runs well. Students should prepare their arguments before the debate to make it easier for them to discuss their opponents' opinions. Finally, debates require students to be controlled in defending their argument, and many students cannot control their emotions when they defend their arguments, taking everything personally.

Although debate has these disadvantages, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages in the improvement of English learning. Furthermore, these are areas that the English teacher must work on in order to minimize or avoid these drawbacks.

2.3.6. Motivation and debate in EFL.

Motivation plays an important role when learning, especially a foreign language. It is an essential requirement for learners because it creates a satisfactory learning environment. In other words, a motivated student is able to learn faster than others.

Dörnyei (1998) said that “motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second/foreign language (L2) learning” (p. 117). Equally important, without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals. The author points out that the key to success in any situation is motivation, so, for this reason, the teacher must be aware that before starting any class he/she needs to motivate their students to use the language, as it will be the only way to reach students' required outcomes. On the other hand, if a teacher does not motivate their students at the beginning of a class, students will feel bored, and as a result, they will not learn anything.



Dörnyei (1998) stated that there are four important subcategories inside motivation; these are: extrinsic, intrinsic, instrumental, and integrative.

- a) Extrinsic motivation occurs when students are motivated to perform a behavior or engage in an activity to earn a reward or avoid punishment, such as when a student wants to get a good grade or to take part in a competition to win a scholarship.
- b) Intrinsic motivation occurs when students want to participate in a sport because they find the activity enjoyable, or playing a game because you find it exciting and you encounter satisfaction within the activity itself.
- c) Instrumental motivation occurs if a student wants to learn a foreign language, and they just want to pass the exam to get jobs, and to use the language for holidays in another country.
- d) Integrative motivation occurs when a student takes interest in knowing more about a foreign language knowing about the culture and values. (p. 120).

Teachers must take into consideration all the aspects mentioned above because at this time there are many students who do not like English; they just take it because it is mandatory or they simply want to earn credits. Here is where teachers have to work hard to motivate students.

In addition, in order to achieve success using debates, teachers will have to design interesting activities, and to create situations according to students' needs; only in this way students will get motivated to learn new things and feel an affinity with the English language.



According to Harmer (2007), “motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something” (p. 120). So, if the learner enters the classroom with positive motivation, they will acquire the language more quickly. Teachers must be prepared to use the correct methodology in order to apply content in the classroom. If the teacher motivates their students, they will learn a significant amount of knowledge and will apply this to real life situations according to their needs, which prepares them to apply the activities before debating.

2.3.7. Activities before debating

During debates, students have to participate actively in class. Therefore, Stewart and Pleisch recommended some activities before the final formal debate that can enhance students’ speaking skills, such as fluency, vocabulary, and so on (as cited in Váscenez, 2015). The authors suggest some activities that can be utilized before holding a debate, as they will make students be more willing to use the language; the recommended activities are:

Activity 1 – For and against fluency pairs: Learners are arranged in pairs to practice for and against arguments. This kind of activity helps the student to be engaged in exchanges and build confidence and fluency.

Activity 2 – Classification Tree: This is a brainstorming technique in which learners are placed into groups and given a topic, and then write all the details to support their argument. The main contribution of this activity to the debate is that it helps to organize ideas and thoughts, so students can express and write their opinions with greater ease.

Activity 3 – Argument/Counter-argument: Learners have to be able to confront their classmates by using counter-arguments. They can record or listen to their classmates. Then, they have to take notes about the information and be able to



present a counter-argument to the class. This activity helps learners organize the presentation of their arguments.

Activity 4 – Paraphrase and counter: This activity helps learners control the language they need to present materials effectively, clarify research findings to partners, synthesize information, and reach conclusions quickly. Learners work in groups and each one gives an argument and responds to a counter-argument.

Activity 5 – The hot seat: This activity develops academic language skills, fosters peer collaboration, and trains students to perform under difficult conditions. Students practice formulating, anticipating, and responding to possible debate questions created by one member of the group.

In conclusion, when debates are carried out in a meaningful context, learners appear to participate in a highly motivated way, and speak more freely, without forcing explicit grammar or vocabulary. Indeed, working with tasks fosters a particular quality of learning satisfaction. In some other cases, this methodology has appeared to enhance other language skills such as listening, reading, and writing. Additionally, learners show distinctive awareness for implicit debating skills and debater characteristics.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND INTERVENTION

3.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter explains the methodology applied to carry out the research study. It describes the main characteristics of the debates, the participants involved, the instruments used to collect information, and the procedures followed to complete the research.

This research study was based on a quantitative methodology, and it followed a quasi-experimental design. It was especially designed to find out if students' speaking skills would improve through the application of the debates in the classroom.

3.1. TYPE OF RESEARCH

This graduation work research was quasi-experimental, as it had an intervention group. It was based on the analytic and scientific method (Clarke, 2005). This was quantitative research because it was a formal, objective, and systematic process in which numerical data was used to get information (Clarke, 2005).

3.2. TIME

The application of the project took place during July 2016- September 2016. Once we received total consent from high school authorities and parents, the research study was carried out between August 2nd to August 20th; four classes per week of 40 minutes each. However, the pre-test, post-test, questionnaires, and explanation of the



topics were not included within this time period; they were completed before the dates mentioned above.

3.3. PARTICIPANTS

The research took place with 25 students from 12th grade at Marcel Laniado High School; most students have a high economic status, and some of them have a B1 level of English. This prestigious private institution, Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind, is located in Machala, in the coastal province of El Oro. Students' ages were between sixteen and seventeen years old.

3.4. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method was based on the analytical method, in which a problem is first identified and then observations, experiments, or other relevant data is used to explain it. The inductive method was also used as a working tool, whereby the researchers tried to extrapolate from particular cases to a general idea (McDonald & Headlam, 2011).

3.5. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

A pre-test and post-test were designed to measure students' ability to use the target language before and after the intervention, as well as the group's development during the class. In order to analyze the data, it was necessary to design a rubric to measure some important aspects of the English language, such as grammatical structures, fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. In addition, this rubric helped us assess students' achievement and development in the classroom environment.



A survey was also designed to learn about students' favorite debating topics, these topics were chosen from students' course book, as well as topics suggested by the students. Once the list of topics was ready, students chose six topics to debate. The idea of this survey was to motivate students by using trendy and interesting content.

- **School**

This research study was carried out with 12th grade students at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe “Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind”. The goal of this high school is to graduate independent language users with a B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages. However, the students who participated in this research do not belong to the bilingual group, and they will be the last ones to graduate from school with an A2 level. However, some students had a higher level of English compared to their classmates.

- **Students**

In order to conduct the debate, we were assigned to work with the above-mentioned group, which consisted of 25 students, 13 females and 12 males. Their ages were between 16 and 17. The ethics of a research study requires asking the participants' and the parent/legal guardians' permission, due to the participants' young age. The researchers also asked school authorities for consent to apply and use the gathered information for our academic purposes. It is important to mention that this consent letter included the main characteristics of the research project, participants' role during the process, the ethics of the research, and information about the researchers. Consequently, the legal procedure took place in order to proceed with the research study on August 2nd, 2016.

3.5.1 Informed Consent Letters



One informed consent letter was accepted by the school board, and sent to the person in charge of the English department. After that, another informed consent letter was sent to the participants and their parents/legal guardians, in order to have a clean start and avoid any future problems (see Annex 1).

3.5.2 Debate Questionnaires

It was important to find out the participants' interest in debating topics. Therefore, we designed a questionnaire to define which topics should be used in the debates; it was carried out during the second week of July. The questionnaire presented nine topics with an extra space in which students could write down an additional one. It was necessary to take into account that the debating topics had to be related to the course book, the high school vision, and the participants' interest (see Annex 2).

3.5.3 Rubric

The rubric used for this research study was an analytical evaluation of the participants' performance in the research project. This rubric was taken from the Rubistar site and we had to set up the indicators to be evaluated. It evaluated performance in five sub-skills: organization and preparation, subject knowledge, mechanics, elocution, and eye contact. Each item was graded from 1 to 4 points, explained below.

Organization & preparation took into account how well students present information in a logical, interesting sequence that the audience could follow.

Subject knowledge was evaluated by how well students answered class questions, with explanations and elaboration, to demonstrate their knowledge.

Mechanics assessed the number of spellings or grammatical errors in the presentation.



Elocution was focused on the students use of a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members could hear the presentation.

Eye contact required that the students maintain eye contact with the audience, and seldom returned to their notes (see Annex 3).

3.5.4 Pre-test / Post-test

An oral test was used to assess participants' speaking skills before and after the treatment of the research project. This test was used to evaluate the five sub-skills mentioned before, and then the results were compared.

3.5.5 Lesson Plans

The EFL course book did not include debate as a teaching technique. In fact, the aim of this research study was to adapt this technique in order to enhance speaking skills. Each topic had one lesson plan, which lasted 40 minutes; moreover, their advantages and disadvantages were also explained to students. Additionally, students were asked to brainstorm their ideas on the board, and then they were guided and told to debate every topic in favor or against (see Annex 4).

3.5.6 Conducting the Debates

For the debate activities, the class was divided in four groups; two groups were in charge of taking notes on the main points and giving their conclusions at the end of the debate. The other two groups were responsible for carrying out the debate. These groups had five minutes to organize their ideas before the debate started. One group was in favor of each topics, and the other group was against it. Each member of the group took turns expressing their points of view. We, as the researchers, were the mediators during the process. In this way, all the students had the opportunity to speak and give their points of view. After finishing each topic, students were asked to give a report to the teacher in oral and written form, to reinforce their knowledge about each topic.



After the completion of the project, the information from the pre-test, post-test, and debates was organized, analyzed and interpreted using charts and graphics of percentages to observe and discuss the results.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS

Before conducting the in-class debates, an observation was carried out. The purpose was to measure students' abilities when using the language. Students were given three minutes to introduce themselves, give their personal information, and talk about their hobbies and interests. During this presentation, we focused on students' weaknesses, as they showed nervousness, shyness, and lack of vocabulary; in other words, they did not feel confident. Most of them did not know how to give a good speech, utilizing expressive gestures, good posture and eye contact, and varied voice inflection.

A week after the observation, students were given a list of topics to choose from; if they wanted to add an extra topic they had a blank space to write it down. After that,



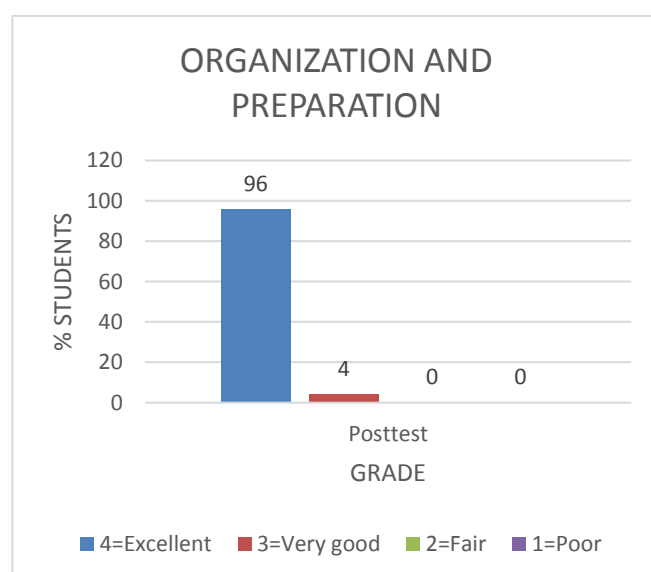
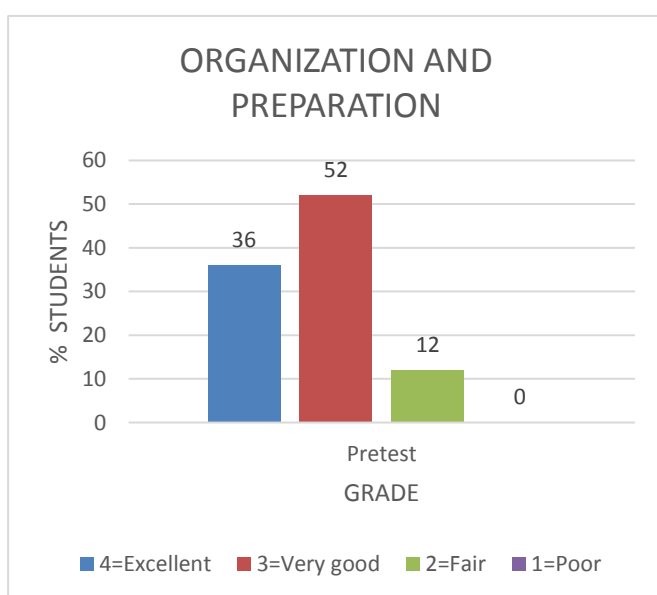
we made a bar graph of the nine most popular topics.

Before we started the application of our study, we developed the pre-test, which consisted of a random debate where each student had the opportunity to participate. We used this to assess and measure students' performance, and then developed a speaking rubric to evaluate five sub-speaking skills. In the pre-test, we could observe that the grades were not good at all. During the debate, students did not respect their turns; they all wanted to speak at the same time. Thus, we had to re-explain how debates work, and refresh their minds of the process, rules, and time limits. Moreover, it is important to mention, that the pre-test was piloted with 12th graders at Benigno Malo High School and this allowed us to change and fix this research instrument for our investigation.

After analyzing each evaluation parameter in the pre-test and post-test, we noted observable results from the intervention that allow us, as researchers, to say that the use of debates can help improve students' speaking skills. It is important to mention that all the graphics presented below show how students have improved or declined in each parameter.

GRAPHIC 1

PARAMETER 1: ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION



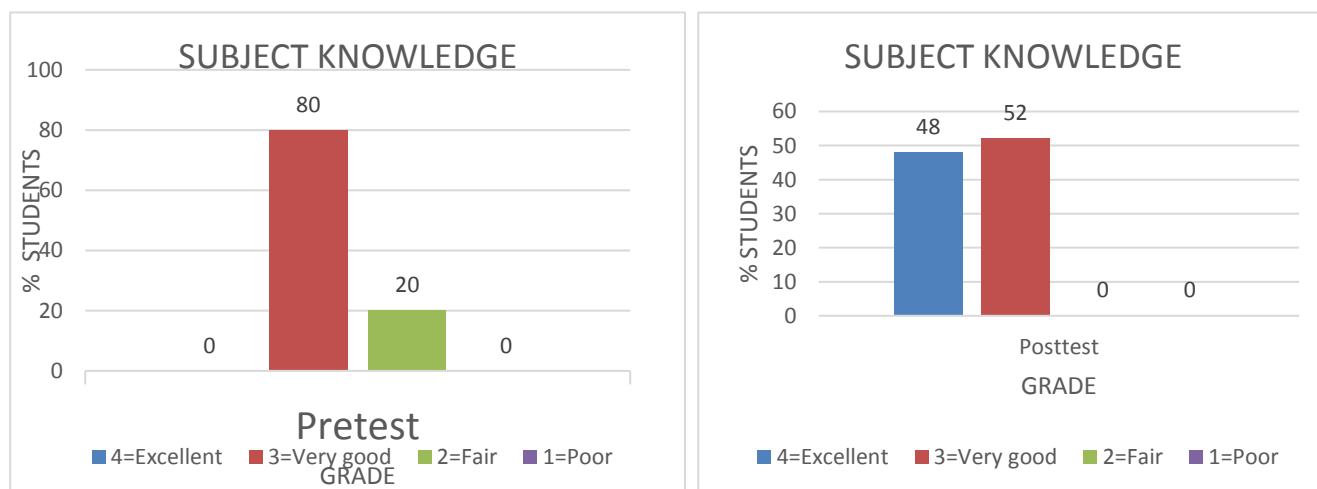
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Pacheco, 2016)

With this parameter, we wanted to explain how the organization and preparation for the topics during the debates evolved from beginning to end. It is important to remember that learners must prepare for debates using certain techniques, like classification trees or argument/counter-argument exercises (Vásconez, 2015). It is imperative to say that during the pre-test, 36% of the participants showed a very good mastery in this parameter, allowing them to hold the debate in an organized and sequential way for the audience to follow. 52% made a great effort as well, and they demonstrated an average level. Although the results of the pre-test were good, we still observed an improvement in scores after the intervention. In the post-test, 96% of the participants (24 students) had completely mastered organization and preparation, debating the topics in an organized, sequential and interesting way for the audience to follow. None of the students scored fair or poor, since most of students made significant progress. This teaching technique focused not only on speaking skills, but also on how well students were able to construct and express their ideas.

GRAPHIC 2

PARAMETER 2: SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE



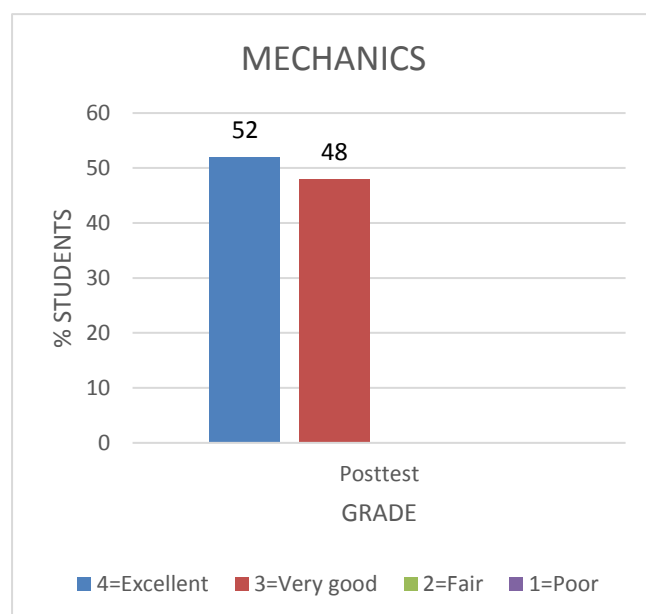
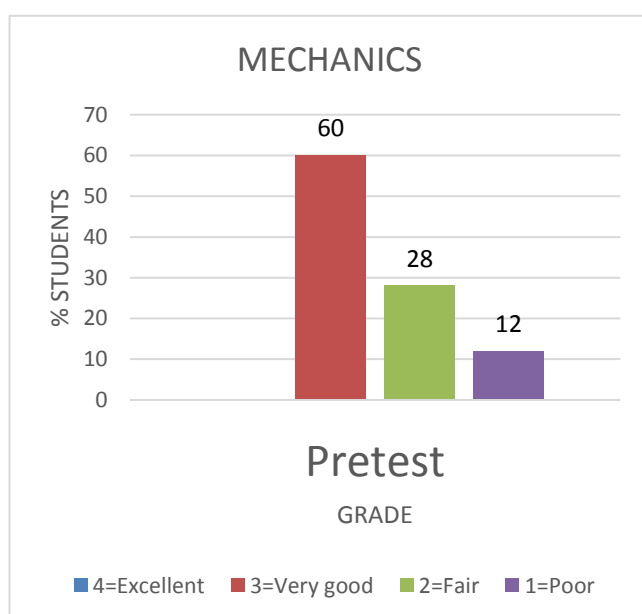
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The second parameter was intended to analyze how much students studied the different aspects of the subject to prepare for the debate. We need to remember that debates encourage students to confirm facts through research of data and details (Metsaki, 2015). Moreover, subject knowledge is important since it allows students to internalize English vocabulary and grammar through real content. During the pre-test, 80% percent of the students showed a *very good* mastery of the subject, which means they could answer questions related to the topic, extract ideas from the subject dimensions, construct their own ideas, and create arguments. During the post-test, the results were also positive; 48% of the students reached an *excellent* score, and 52% of them scored a *very good* rating. The *fair* parameter, obtained during the pre-test, completely disappeared, which led us to conclude that the use of the debate technique allowed students to show confidence with their answers through the construction of ideas by using relevant information during the debate.

GRAPHIC 3

PARAMETER 3: MECHANICS



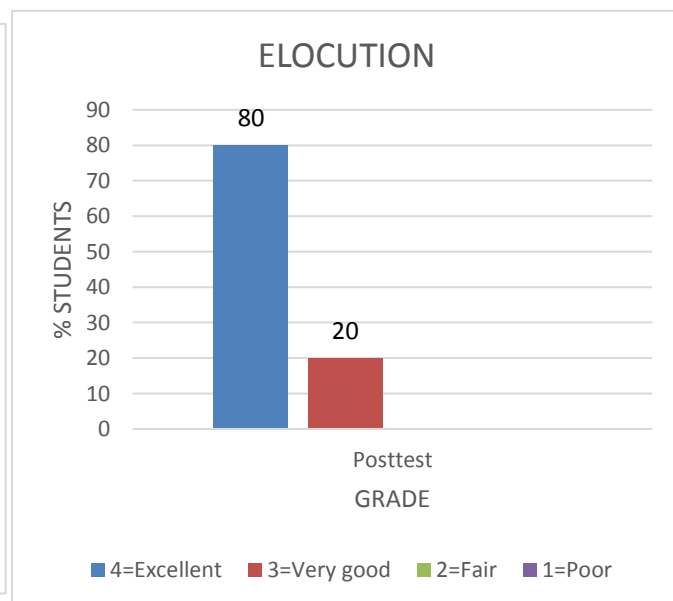
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Pacheco, 2016)

The third parameter was based on mechanics, which includes grammatical mistakes and misspellings made by students during the debate. This is probably one of the most difficult elements to develop with students, since they are prone to make a lot of mistakes in these areas. During the pre-test, 60% of students received a rating of *good*. However, there were also 28% who scored *fair*, and 12% who did *poor* and did not accomplish the evaluation objectives at all. It was observed that most of students made three or four grammar mistakes and several misspellings, because of different reasons such as lack of knowledge of grammar rules, shyness and nervousness. However, during the application of the treatment, we could notice an improvement in these elements, which were verified in the results of the post-test. 48% of students reached the qualification of *very good* and 52% accomplished an *excellent* rating. This improvement means that students overcame those language difficulties with the structure of the language, and they started talking with more confidence and fluency, which takes us to the following parameter.

GRAPHIC 4

PARAMETER 4: ELOCUTION

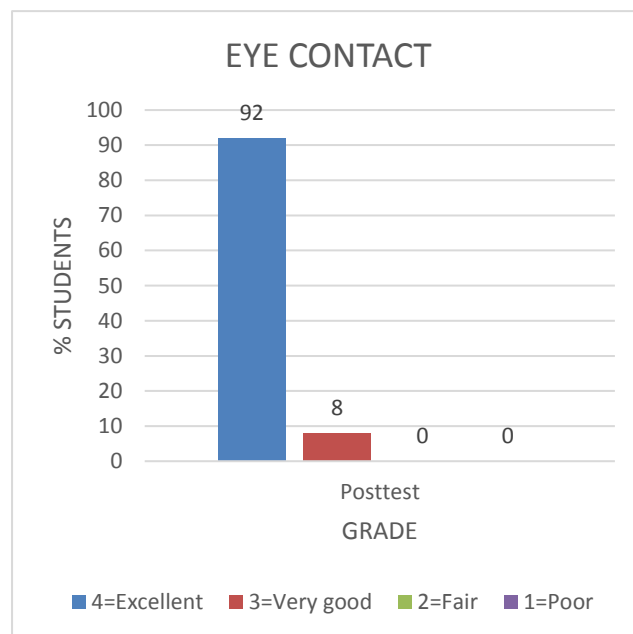
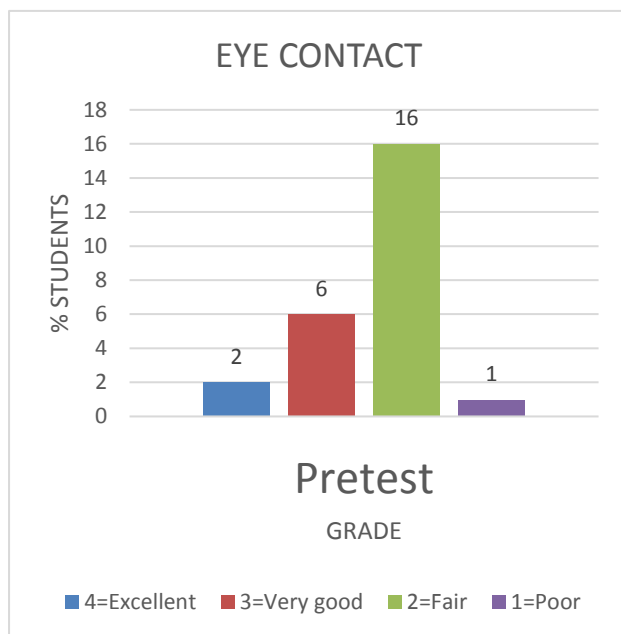


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With the elocution parameter, we wanted to assess how debating effects the development of oral speech, including voice and gesture control. Notice that this parameter emphasizes aspects such as volume (to appropriately fill the acoustic space), pitch (to indicate emotional state), and speed (to emphasize key points) (Snider, 2008). During the pre-test, 40% of students had mastered this skill in an *excellent* way, and 56% were *very good*. Nobody scored *fair* in this parameter, due to the fact that the majority of the students performed very well. Some of the problems presented were vocal clarity during the debate, and pronunciation issues that influenced comprehension. In addition, students had difficulties expressing their ideas through their gestures. However, the post-test showed us that 80% of students started to improve in these aspects, and they reached an *excellent* level in this skill.

GRAPHIC 5

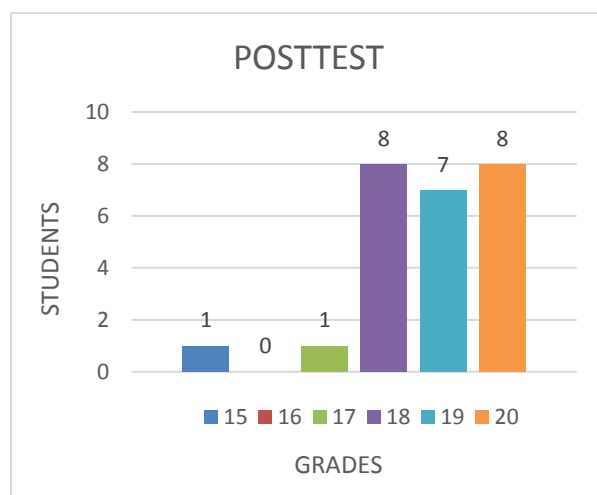
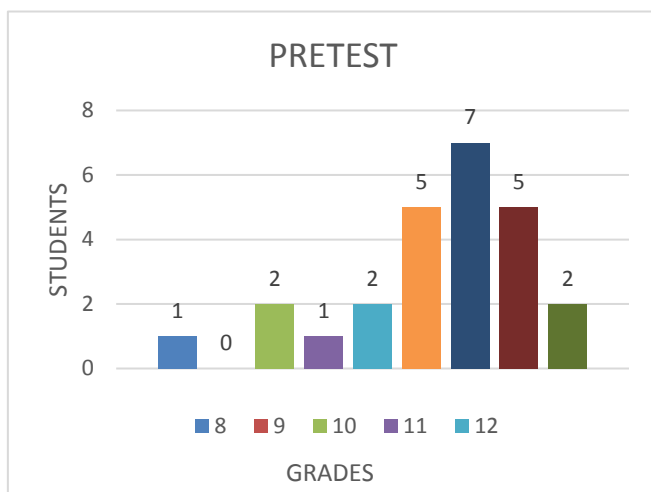
PARAMETER 5: EYE CONTACT



by: (Armijos & Pacheco, 2016)

The last aspect evaluated was eye contact; this has to do with how confident speakers are when talking, and the connection they have with the audience. When students maintain eye contact during the debate, it means that they are not worried about grammar mistakes or misspellings, but instead more focused on the idea they are trying to communicate. During the pre-test, only 8% scored an *excellent* performance in the eye contact parameter, 24% of them demonstrated a *very good* performance, 64% of students had developed this skill in a *fair* manner, and 4% scored *poor*. However, after doing several exercises focused on this area during the treatment, students started to look at the audience with a more positive attitude, appeared less shy, and showed confidence in their skills. After the post-test, results showed that 92% of students improved their level of eye contact, reaching an *excellent* level, and the remaining 8% of language learners showed a *very good* performance, which means that they were able to present their arguments to the audience using their body language and gesture in a more relaxed and appropriate way.

GENERAL ANALYSIS BETWEEN PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST



Created by: (Armijos &
Pacheco, 2016)



Finally, when comparing the grades from the pre-test and the post-test; we can say that in a general manner there was an improvement. The results show that during the pre-test, most students were in a range between 13 and 15 points. However, after the intervention, most students achieved between 18 and 20 points. Students managed to develop their abilities since they learned how to talk in public using real language in everyday contexts. Motivation had a fundamental role, since students were involved in a project beyond regular classes or homework. The knowledge of the subject guaranteed that students internalized the language and they were able to express themselves more fluently and with confidence. Other elements from the treatment were demonstrated to be important, too. Organization and preparation helped students to distribute ideas according to the topic; mechanics aimed to improve grammar, and elocution and eye contact were successful at pushing students to talk during debates with less stress and more accuracy.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

According to the results and the objectives established for this research, it is possible to conclude the following:

As a general objective, the intervention was designed to improve speaking skills in 12th graders through the use of debate activities at Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe “Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind” in Machala. We could see from the results that students accomplished the goal, since they improved their speaking skills using the debate technique. The majority of students managed to solve their confidence problems when speaking in front of an audience, establish more eye contact, prepare information for the debates, and organize this information, among other requirements for a well done debate.

The analysis of the bibliographical and scientific information determined in several studies the advantages of using debates to improve English speaking skills in high school students. These academic papers and recommendations were used to structure the lesson plans that were successfully implemented during class, including debate organization and types of debates.

The results established that students felt confident and motivated during debates, since they could prepare their speeches and talk to their classmates during the organization. This is a deep transformation of the regular class based mainly on grammar structure, vocabulary learning, and exercises from the textbook. In addition, students hardly ever leave their comfort zone in class, reducing their participation to



producing some basic sentences at the teacher's request. However, the idea of debates generated a broader conception of learning English, in both the participants and the researchers; debating encouraged participants to produce more vocabulary and create complex sentences to defend significant ideas during debates. It was observed that students made an effort to be at the same level of their classmates and tried to be understood in front of an audience.



5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is imperative to say that the general curriculum of English learning and the textbooks includes debate activities. However, teachers do not use most of them, since there are time limitations in preparing these kind of activities. Based on this, we present the following recommendations:

English teachers from Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe “Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind” in Machala must participate in more workshops where it is possible to learn about debate techniques, and get updated on how to improve speaking skills, since it was proved during the diagnosis that it is the most difficult English skill to be developed by students.

It is suggested that teachers should use more approaches like debates, since they increase student motivation and engagement. In order to do this, the debate topics must be based on students’ interests. Also, there are enough topics in the textbook to guarantee that students could practice their speaking skills the whole school year, using speaking skills to practice topics from the textbook. Therefore, lesson plans should include debate activities that push students to talk in class.

From our points of view as researchers and teachers, the most important recommendation for further investigation relates to the enhancement of speaking skills through the use of debate. We believe that it is important to apply debates with different age groups and levels, as well as widening the number of students and amount of time for the application. Addressing these factors can provide different and more reliable results about the efficiency of debate activities within the classroom setting.

To carry out this project, one of the limitations was time, since sometimes teachers had meetings, or students did not go to class for various reasons, so it was not



always possible to keep in touch with them to conduct the debates. School authorities gave the correspondent permission and students agreed to collaborate with this research.

To sum up, the current research study has aimed to make a contribution to foreign language learning. The valuable outcomes could be applied to different educational situations and institutions interested in enhancing speaking skills. The main contribution of debate as a teaching technique was to help students become more active, independent language users, as well as become more confident regarding their speech.



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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Informed Consent from School Authorities

Machala, 01 de Agosto de 2016

Señor:

Mgs. John Timothy Nilsson

Rector del Colegio Bilingüe Marcel Laniado de Wind

De mis consideraciones:

Nosotros Adriana Pacheco Padilla y Diego Armijos Solano, egresados de la Facultad de Filosofía de la Universidad de Cuenca, debido a la importancia de mejorar continuamente la enseñanza del idioma inglés y el desarrollo académico de los estudiantes, solicito a usted el permiso respectivo para realizar nuestro proyecto de tesis, *“Improving the Speaking Skill Using Debate Technique Activities in 12th graders,”* (Mejorar las Destrezas del Habla Usando la Técnica del Debate en Tercero de Bachillerato) para la obtención del título de licenciatura en Lengua Y Literatura Inglesa de la Universidad de Cuenca. El mismo será aplicado a los estudiantes del 3ro de B.G.U paralelo “D” de la institución que usted preside.

Tengo la firme convicción de que este estudio será de mucha utilidad para la Área de Lengua Extranjera, ya que se basa en la aplicación de metodologías basadas en tareas y el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico. De la misma manera impulsa la motivación de los estudiantes hacia el aprendizaje y el perfeccionamiento de las destrezas del idioma inglés.



Por la atención prestada a la presente, me despido agradeciéndole de antemano por su valiosa colaboración.

Atentamente,

.....

Adriana Pacheco Padilla

CI: 0105780738

.....

Diego Armijos Solano

CI: 0705864403



Annex 2: Students' Informed Consent Form

Machala, 01 de Agosto de 2013

Señor

Padre de Familia del (la) Estudiante de 3ro BGU paralelo “D”

Colegio Bilingüe Marcel Laniado de Wind

De nuestra consideracion:

Nosotros Adriana Pacheco y Diego Armijos egresados de la Universidad de Cuenca. Por medio de la presente, nos permitimos pedirle su autorización para que su representado participe en un estudio educativo, el cual tiene como fundamento mejorar la enseñanza del idioma inglés a través del uso de debates para el mejoramiento de las destrezas del habla.

Los objetivos principales de este estudio son el perfeccionamiento de la destreza oral; así como también la aplicación de los conocimientos adquiridos en la vida real de los estudiantes.

Si está de acuerdo en que su representante participe en este estudio, los estudiantes del colegio Bilingüe Marcel Laniado de Wind serán requeridos contestar a ciertas preguntas por medio de cuestionarios y ser partícipes en los debates a lo largo del estudio. De la misma manera serán observados como parte del grupo seleccionado por el periodo de duración del estudio. Su identidad será protegida y la información obtenida en relación con este estudio que podría identificarlo será guardada en estricta confidencialidad.



Cualquier pregunta de este estudio podrá ser dirigida a Adriana Pacheco y Diego Armijos a través de nuestro email: armi_omar90@hotmail.com, o directamente con las autoridades del plantel.

Por la atención prestada a la presente nos despedimos, agradeciéndole de antemano por su inmensa y valiosa colaboración.

Atentamente,

Adriana Pacheco

Diego Armijos

.....

.....

0105780738

0705864403

Su firma y la de su representado dan la validez al consentimiento de su participación en este estudio y el conocimiento de la información que se ha explicado en esta carta.

Firma del Representante:

Firma del Participante:

Annex 3: Debating Topics Questionnaire

Research instrument – debates questionnaire

Here you have a list of topics that could be used for debates in the classroom.

Indicate with an X the topics which you like the most. If you want to include any other topic, please write it down at the end of the document. The topic must be according either to your context or interest.

1	Do video games really cause bad behavior in children?	
2	Are technological inventions beneficial for humans?	
3	Should marijuana be legalized for medicinal purposes?	
4	Should laptops be allowed in classrooms?	
5	Should cell phones be used during class?	
6	What impact does social networking have on society?	
7	Should sex education be taught in school?	
8	Is man-made global warming a hoax?	
9	Do we have less face-to-face interaction because of Facebook?	
10		





Annex 4: Speaking Rubric

NAME(S):			DATE: August 2, 2016	
TOPIC:			GROUP: 3 "D"	
	3,0	2,0	1,0	0,5
ORGANIZATION & PREPARATION	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.
SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) by answering all class questions with explanations and elaboration.	Student is at ease with expected answers to all questions, but fails to elaborate.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.



MECHANICS	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Student's presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.
ELOCUTION	Student uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can hear presentation.	Student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation.	Student's voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear.
EYE CONTACT	Student maintains eye contact with audience, seldom	Student maintains eye contact most of the time but	Student occasionally uses eye contact, but	Student reads all of report with no eye contact.




	returning to notes.	frequently returns to notes.	still reads most of report.	
OBSERVATIONS:	—			
				FINAL GRADE:
Teachers:				
	ADRIANA PACHECO	DIEGO ARMIJOS		



Annex 5: Lesson Plans

LESSON PLAN 1

1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:

		NAME OF THE SCHOOL: UEPRIM				SCHOOL YEAR: 2016-2017	
PLANNING BY SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA							
1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:							
Teachers :	Prof. Adriana Pacheco Prof. Diego Armijos	Area/Subject :	Foreign Language	Course:	12th graders	Parallel: D	Periods: 80minutes
Unit No.	3	Unit Title:	Debates	Objective:	To introduce the students what the debate technique is about, the steps to start a debate, and the rules in order to be applied it.		

SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA TO BE DEVELOPED:				
	Methodological Strategies	Resources	Performance Indicators	Evaluation Activities/Techniques/Instruments
Oral Communication: To improve speaking skills using debating activities	Class 1: “WHAT IS THE DEBATE TECHNIQUE?” Anticipation: Warm Up: Teachers will ask the students through elicitation about the debate technique in order to identify how much information they know about this technique. Knowledge construction: The teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher’s Guide • Black board • Human Talent • Worksheets • Student Book • Real Information 	Students talk about what they know about debate technique. Students make questions about debate technique. Students make mistakes and recognize	Observation Questioning Speaking Self-assessment/ questions and answers. TPR: students are involved in the learning process.




	<p>will explain what the debate technique is, rules and steps to start a debate technique.</p> <p>Consolidation: The students will form groups in order to set up a debate. The debate will include the steps and rules mentioned before.</p>		<p>them immediately.</p> <p>After the explanation student will perform a debate.</p> <p>Students will include all the steps and rules in the debate.</p>	
PREPARED BY:		REVISED BY:		APPROVED BY:
Teacher (s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adriana Pacheco, Diego Armijos 		Area director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lcdo. Bismark Vega 		Vice principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mgs. Dorys Pacheco
Date: August 8, 2016.		Date: August 8, 2016.		Date: Date: August 8, 2016.



LESSON PLAN 2

1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:

 UEPRIM <small>SE DUC C. LTDA.</small> <small>Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe</small> <small>"Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind"</small>				NAME OF THE SCHOOL: UEPRIM			SCHOOL YEAR: 2016-2017
PLANNING BY SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA							
1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:							
Teachers :	Prof. Adriana Pacheco Prof. Diego Armijos		Area/Subject :	Foreign Language s	Course: 12th graders	Parallel: D	Periods: 40minutes
Unit No.	3	Unit Title:	Debates	Objective:	To distinguish the possible consequences of playing video games, and discussing the advantages and disadvantages about them.		

SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA TO BE DEVELOPED:				
	Methodological Strategies	Resources	Performance Indicators	Evaluation Activities/Techniques/Instruments
Oral Communication: To improve speaking skills using debating activities	Class 2: “DO VIDEO GAMES REALLY CAUSE BAD BEHAVIOR IN CHILDREN?” Anticipation: Warm Up: The students will talk about their personal opinion about video games. The students will talk about their own interaction with video games. Knowledge construction: Students will be asked to set up a debate about the use of video games where they will express their different points of view. Consolidation: The teacher will collect the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher’s Guide • Black board • Human Talent • Worksheets • Student Book • Real Information 	Students talk about what they know about video games. Students ask questions about video games. Students make mistakes and recognize them immediately. After the explanation, student will perform a debate.	Observation Questioning Speaking Self-assessment/ questions and answers. TPR: students are involved in the learning process.




	information provided by the debate and discuss the conclusions to the students. The students will be asked to express their personal opinions again after concluding the debate about video games.		Students will include all the steps and rules in the debate. Students will express their opinions either in favor or against video games.	
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PREPARED BY:	REVISED BY:	APPROVED BY:
Teacher (s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adriana Pacheco, Diego Armijos 	Area director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lcdo. Bismark Vega 	Vice principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mgs. Dorys Pacheco
Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.



LESSON PLAN 3

6. INFORMATIONAL DATA:

		NAME OF THE SCHOOL: UEPRIM			SCHOOL YEAR: 2016-2017	
PLANNING BY SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA						
1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:						
Teachers :	Prof. Adriana Pacheco Prof. Diego Armijos	Area/Subject :	Foreign Languages	Course:	12th graders	Parallel: D
						Periods: 40 minutes
Unit No.	3	Unit Title:	Debates	Objective:	To state the advantages and disadvantages of using the cellphone during class.	

SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA TO BE DEVELOPED:				
	Methodological Strategies	Resources	Performance Indicators	Evaluation Activities/Techniques/Instruments
Oral Communication: To improve speaking skills using debating activities	CLASS 3: “SHOULD CELL PHONES BE USED DURING CLASS?” Anticipation: Warm Up: Speaking activity. The students will talk about their personal opinion about the use of cellphones inside and outside the class. Knowledge construction:: The students will render a debate about the use of cellphone during the class where they will state their different points of view.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher’s Guide • Black board • Human Talent • Worksheets • Student Book • Real 	Students will talk about the use of cellphones. Students ask questions about the use of cellphones. Students make mistakes and recognize them immediately. Students will include all the steps and rules in the debate.	Observation Questioning Speaking Self-assessment/ questions and answers. TPR: students are involved in the learning process.




	Consolidation: The teacher will collect the information provided by the debate and discuss the conclusions with the students. The students will be asked to express their personal opinion again after concluding the debate about the use of cellphones during class.	Information	Students will express their opinion about the use of cellphones.	
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PREPARED BY:	REVISED BY:	APPROVED BY:
Teacher (s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adriana Pacheco, Diego Armijos 	Area director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lcdo. Bismark Vega 	Vice principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mgs. Dorys Pacheco
Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.



LESSON PLAN 4

1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:

 UEPRIM <small>SEDUC C. LTDA. Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe "Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind"</small>				NAME OF THE SCHOOL: UEPRIM			SCHOOL YEAR: 2016-2017	
PLANNING BY SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA								
1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:								
Teachers :	Prof. Adriana Pacheco Prof. Diego Armijos		Area/Subject :	Foreign Languages	Course:	12th graders	Parallel: D	Periods: 40 minutes
Unit No.		3	Unit Title:		Debates		Objective:	To analyze either the advantages or disadvantages about technology in recent times.

SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE			
	Methodological Strategies	Resources	Performance Evaluation

CRITERIA TO BE DEVELOPED:			Indicators	Activities/Techniques/Instruments
Oral Communication: To improve speaking skills using debating activities	CLASS 3: “ARE TECHNOLOGICAL INVENTIONS BENEFICIAL FOR HUMANS?” Anticipation: Warm Up: Reading activity about the latest technological inventions. Knowledge construction: The students will be asked to set up a debate about the latest technological inventions where they will express their different points of view. Consolidation: The teacher will collect the information provided by the previous debate and discuss the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher’s Guide • Black board • Human Talent • Worksh eets • Student Book • Real Informa tion 	Students will read about technology. Students ask questions about technology. Students make mistakes and recognize them immediately. After the reading activity students will perform a debate. Students will include all the steps and rules in the debate.	Reading Observation Questioning Speaking Self-assessment/ questions and answers. TPR: students are involved in the learning process.




	conclusions. The students will be asked to state their personal opinion again after concluding the debate about technological inventions.		Students will express their opinion about technology.	
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PREPARED BY:	REVISED BY:	APPROVED BY:
Teacher (s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adriana Pacheco, Diego Armijos 	Area director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lcdo. Bismark Vega 	Vice principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mgs. Dorys Pacheco
Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.



LESSON PLAN 5

1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:

		NAME OF THE SCHOOL: UEPRIM			SCHOOL YEAR: 2016-2017	
PLANNING BY SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA						
1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:						
Teachers :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof. Adriana Pacheco Prof. Diego Armijos 	Area/Subject :	Foreign Languages	Course:	12 th graders	Parallel: D Periods: 40 minutes
Unit No.	3	Unit Title:	Debates	Objective:	To raise awareness about the importance of sex education to be taught either in schools or high schools.	

SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE				
	Methodological Strategies	Resources	Performance Indicators	Evaluation

CRITERIA TO BE DEVELOPED:				Activities/Techniques/Instruments
Oral Communication: To improve speaking skills using debating activities	CLASS 4: “SHOULD SEX EDUCATION BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOL?” Anticipation: Warm Up: Reading activity. The students will read information about sex education. The students will ask questions about any doubts they might have. Knowledge construction: The students will be asked to set up a debate about sex education in the schools where they will express their different points of view. Consolidation: The teacher will gather the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher’s Guide • Black board • Human Talent • Worksheets • Student Book • Real Information 	Students will read information about sex education. Students make questions about sex education. Students will include all the steps and rules in the debate. Students will express their opinion about sex	Reading Observation Questioning Speaking Self-assessment/ questions and answers. TPR: students are involved in the learning process.




	information provided by the debate and discuss the conclusions. The students will be asked to express their personal opinion again after concluding the debate.		education. Teacher will communicate the conclusions of debate.	
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PREPARED BY:	REVISED BY:	APPROVED BY:
Teacher (s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adriana Pacheco, Diego Armijos 	Area director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lcdo. Bismark Vega 	Vice principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mgs. Dorys Pacheco
Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.

LESSON PLAN 6

1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:



		NAME OF THE SCHOOL: UEPRIM				SCHOOL YEAR: 2016-2017	
PLANNING BY SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA							
1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:							
Teachers :	Prof. Adriana Pacheco Prof. Diego Armijos	Area/Subject :	Foreign Languages	Course:	12 th graders	Parallel: D	Periods: 40 minutes
Unit No.	3	Unit Title:	Debates	Objective:	To discuss the legalization of marijuana for medical purposes.		

SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA TO BE DEVELOPED:				
	Methodological Strategies	Resources	Performance Indicators	Evaluation Activities/Techniques/ Instruments
Oral	CLASS 5: "SHOULD MARIJUANA BE	• Teacher's	Students will read about	Reading Activity

<p>Communication:</p> <p>To improve speaking skills using debating activities</p>	<p>LEGALIZED FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSES?"</p> <p>Anticipation: Warm Up: Reading activity. The students will read about the use of marijuana and when it should be used. The students will ask questions about any doubts they may have.</p> <p>Knowledge construction: The students will be asked to set up a debate about medicinal marijuana legalization, where they will express if they are in favor or against.</p> <p>Consolidation: The teacher will collect the information provided by the debate and explain the conclusions with the students. The students will be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black board • Human Talent • Worksheet • Student Book • Real Information 	<p>Guide</p> <p>the uses of marijuana.</p> <p>Students make questions about the topic.</p> <p>Students will include all the steps and rules in the debate.</p> <p>Students will express their opinion about the topic.</p> <p>Teacher will communicate the</p>	<p>Observation</p> <p>Questioning</p> <p>Speaking</p> <p>Self-assessment/ questions and answers.</p> <p>TPR: students are involved in the learning process.</p>
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	asked to express their personal opinion again after concluding the debate.		conclusions of debate.	
--	--	--	-------------------------------	--

PREPARED BY:	REVISED BY:	APPROVED BY:
Teacher (s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adriana Pacheco, Diego Armijos 	Area director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lcdo. Bismark Vega 	Vice principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mgs. Dorys Pacheco
Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.



LESSON PLAN 7

1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:

 UEPRIM SEDUC C. LTDA. Unidad Educativa Particular Bilingüe "Principito & Marcel Laniado de Wind"				NAME OF THE SCHOOL: UEPRIM			SCHOOL YEAR: 2016-2017	
PLANNING BY SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA								
1. INFORMATIONAL DATA:								
Teachers	Prof. Adriana Pacheco		Area/Subject	Foreign Language	Course	12th graders	Parallel: D	Periods: 40 minutes
:	Prof. Diego Armijos		:	s	:			
Unit No.	3	Unit Title:	Debates	Objective:	To discuss the misuse of social networks.			

1.

SKILLS AND		
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PERFORMANCE CRITERIA TO BE DEVELOPED:	Methodological Strategies	Resources	Performance Indicators	Evaluation Activities/Techniques/ Instruments
Oral Communication: To improve speaking skills using debating activities	CLASS 6: “DO WE HAVE LESS FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION BECAUSE OF FACEBOOK?” Anticipation: Warm Up: Reading activity. The students will read about the history of the social networks and how social networks affect interaction among people. Construction of the knowledge: The students will set up a debate about social networks where they will express their different points of view. Consolidation: The teacher will collect the information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher's Guide • Blackboard • Human Talent • Workshops • Student Book • Real Information 	Students will read about social networks. Students will ask questions about the topic. Students will include all the steps and rules in the debate. Students will express their opinion about the	Reading Activity Observation Questioning Speaking Self-assessment/ questions and answers. TPR: students are involved in the learning process.



	provided by the debate and explain the conclusions with the students. The students will be asked to express their personal opinion again after concluding the debate.	tion	topic. Teacher will communicate the conclusions of debate.	
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PREPARED BY:	REVISED BY:	APPROVED BY:
Teacher (s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adriana Pacheco, Diego Armijos 	Area director: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lcdo. Bismark Vega 	Vice principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mgs. Dorys Pacheco
Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.	Date: August 8, 2016.